

November Title I Newsletter

This document is written in hopes of correcting some misinformation and misinterpretation concerning the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Questions that have been posed by school staff are included and answered.

Communication

- In speaking to teachers across the state, it does not appear that many teachers are getting all of the information that is coming out of the Title I office or the department. One example would be the NCLB newsletters that have been developed by DECA staff to articulate the requirements of NCLB and the course of action needed here in South Dakota to implement the act. It is the responsibility of district and school administration to ensure that all staff receive the information. Suggestions: place a copy of the document in the teacher's lounge, put a route slip on copies to make sure all staff have read it, discuss each newsletter or communication at staff meetings, put a copy in each staff member's mailbox, etc. However it works best in your school; just get the message out.
- NCLB newsletters can be found on the website at: <http://www.state.sd.us/deca/NCLB/index.htm> under Newsletter Archives.
- Check out the Title I website as information is being posted as soon as it is developed. It is a goal that the website will eventually offer sample forms, law and regulations, all communication documents, implementation procedures, and related links to help all schools fully implement their Title I program.
- Title I Part A (Basic) website: <http://www.state.sd.us/deca/TA/basic/>
- For the fastest response to your questions about Title I, please email Diane Lowery, Title I Director, at: diane.lowery@state.sd.us

Consolidated Application Questions

General Questions

- **Is a school district able to spend their 2002-2003 allocations, even if our application has not been approved?** Districts may obligate funds once the application is received by DECA. Payment cannot be made until the application is approved.
- **When do we hear about our consolidated application?** Once all of Parts I and II have been approved, Grants Management will sent out an approval letter.
- **Is the state still going to do a "laundry list" of SBR programs?** No decisions have been made at this time. DECA is waiting for direction from USDOE in this regard.
- **Has a reading program called Success for All by Robert Slavin from John Hopkins been considered as a scientifically based research?** This program has been an approved program for the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration projects (CSRD). Many schools across the nation have used it. Jane Adams Elementary in Sioux Falls implemented this program with the help of their CSRD grant.
- **We have had a large influx of students due to open enrollment (about 30 students). Is there a possibility of raising our allocation or our poverty level?** Open enrollment has already been taken into account during the allocation process.

Specific response to LEA Consolidated Application concerns

- There were three questions that seemed troublesome for most districts. These were questions 4, 9, and 12 under the Title I General Narrative section.
- **4. *Identify the portions of your professional development plan described in General Narrative question #2 that addresses the needs of sections 1118(parental involvement) and 1119(teacher quality).*** Question 4 asks about both section 1118 (parent involvement) and 1119 (teacher and paraprofessional requirements). I'll address 1118 here and 1119 in question 9. In the consolidated application for next year, the two sections will be separated into their own questions to avoid confusion.

Section 1118 – Parental Involvement – specifies training that must be provided to parents. Districts are responsible for helping parents of all students in the district understand the state content and achievement standards, state and local assessments, and the accountability system. Suggestions must also be provided as to ways that parents can work with their children to help raise achievement levels and how they can monitor their child's progress.

Parenting training must also be provided to help parents of children in various stages of development and at different ages deal with issues that arise. Many schools offer training such as Love and Logic to help meet this need. There are many other methods that could be used as well.

The district must also provide training and discussion opportunities for staff regarding the role of the parent in their child's education. All district staff must understand and value the role of the parent. Training must be provided to enhance staff ability to communicate and work effectively with parents. Staff need guidance in implementing and coordinating parent programs as required by section 1118.

Because this was an area in most consolidated applications that was not fully addressed, DECA will note this as an area of need and technical assistance will be provided to all districts during this coming year.

- **9. *How will the LEA meet the requirements of section 1119 regarding highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals?*** Question 9 asks for information about teacher and paraprofessional qualifications. Actual numbers are needed, both for the sake of the LEA (local education agency or district) as well as the SEA (state education agency or DECA). Districts must do a needs assessment to determine effective use of federal funds and the determination of the numbers of teachers and paraprofessionals not meeting full requirements must be part of that needs assessment. DECA must also aggregate these numbers provided by the districts to determine the need statewide. This information will be used as the SEA completes its Consolidated Application for the federal education department.

The information recently sent out by email and available on the Title I website regarding the assurance of compliance with section 1119 provided sample grids that could be used to document these needs.

This information is for the district use only. It does not need to be given verbatim to parents. Only information specific to the parent's child can be released to the parent. Please note the article about "Parent's Right to Know" on the website under section 1119 or within the NCLB newsletter about teachers and paras.

The assurance of compliance does not need to be sent into DECA; it must be on file in the building and district offices. When conducting on-site reviews, DECA staff will ask to see this documentation.

There is confusion about the required 5% set-aside of district Title I funds for the purposes of section 1119. This may be in part because DECA has not received clear guidance from the federal office on this issue either. But it is our understanding at this time, based on the statute and draft regulations, that the 5% can be used for the following only:

- a. for any costs incurred by existing paraprofessionals in meeting the requirements. This could include tuition and fees for college credits, fees for training and for the state test to be available soon, and materials related to training and classes
- b. for tuition and fees for existing Title I teachers related to acquiring full certification and endorsement requirements
- c. for tuition and fees for existing teachers in a Title I school who teach core subject areas to meet certification and endorsement requirements.

Draft regulations state that the district is required to set aside the full 5%, but not more than 10%, unless a lesser amount is needed. If all, or nearly all teachers and paras have meet the requirements, a district may set aside only that amount that is estimated to be needed for this coming year. Full qualifications must be met by the 2005-2006 school year. Regulations require the LEA to give priority for the use of professional development expenditures to helping teachers and paraprofessionals meet the requirements for being highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals.

A district may use additional Title I funds for ongoing training and professional development to help teachers and paras carry out their Title I activities.

Title I funds cannot be used for general professional development provided by the district for all teachers. They must be used specifically for the Title I program.

Please refer to the NCLB newsletter sent out by DECA in August (also available on the Title I website) for more information regarding the qualifications for teachers and paras.

- **12. Describe the district's transition plan for children entering kindergarten.** Question 12 relates to transition of preschool children into kindergarten and district coordination with Early Childhood agency requirements. This again was a difficult area for most districts. The first part of the question asks the district to describe the methods of communication it has established with parents of all four-year-old children in the district. The district must also describe the activities it provides for all children and their families as they prepare to enter kindergarten once they reach age eligibility.

The second part of the question asks the district to describe coordination efforts with early childhood agencies that serve preschool children who reside within the district. This includes services, communication, meetings, and trainings that would be conducted between the district and agencies. The district is also required to develop and implement a systematic procedure for receiving and exchanging records for the preschool child entering kindergarten. This is also a requirement for all Head Start agencies, which should make this requirement quite easy to comply with. It may take more effort to make those same arrangements with other early childhood programs that have not been involved with these activities before.

Training for districts will be provided in the area of transition and coordination in early spring of this year.

Standards

- The prioritized core content standards are on DECA's website at: <http://www.state.sd.us/deca/TA/contentstandards/index.htm>
- Revised performance descriptors will also be available on that website and linked from the Title I web page once they have been approved by the State Board of Education.
- **How can educators be flexible and change their plans according to student interests when they have a set of standards to teach?** Content and achievement standards indicate the minimum that must be met in curriculum and expectations. But the methods and materials used to teach these standards are up to the district and teacher. A teacher is free to work within the standards framework to design instruction to meet the individual needs of students or the class.

Assessment

- NCLB requires a minimum of 95% participation in the state assessment for each school, district, and subgroup.
- This does not mean that only 95% of the students must be tested. It provides a cushion for those difficult situations where students are unable to participate. In other words, there are no exclusions to the testing requirement. All students enrolled must be tested, even if they enroll the day of the test. With the length of the testing window, meeting this testing requirement should not be as challenging.
- Students taking the alternate assessment (STAARS) are counted as having participated in the assessment system.
- **We talk about proficient/advanced – what is wrong with average?** South Dakota has developed content standards (defines what students should know and be able to do) and achievement standards (describes the level of expectation – how good is good enough?). The goal is to have all students perform at proficiency.

Disaggregated Profiles

- There were three sets of profile reports sent in the latest packet from this office: state, district, and school profiles.
- We have since noticed that there are incorrect labels on the district and school level reports. The state sheets are labeled correctly.
- You will notice that the district report also gives a profile for each of the grades as a whole; 4th, 8th, and 11th. If you have more than one elementary school, this report aggregates the results from the 4th graders at all of the elementary schools and combines it into one report.
- The profiles will be available on the Title I Part A webs page. It is suggested that each district go to the website to view the reports online and correct the labeling on the copies sent to you. You may also download the reports directly from the internet.
- Reporting – districts are responsible for disseminating the results of the state assessment to parents, the community, and the Board of Education. This year districts will use the Title I graphs, the Title I AYP Status Report, and the disaggregated profiles to report

assessment results to the public. Next year, DECA will provide the state, district, and school progress reports (report cards) required by NCLB to LEAS's.

Accountability

- Statewide system – DECA has met with the accountability council consisting of representatives from districts, business, education agencies, legislature, and the state Board of Education. Preliminary discussion was held as to the components of the required statewide system. This system will be applied to all public schools and districts in the state upon approval of the legislature.
- Reading and math assessment results will be used to determine AYP (adequate yearly progress).
- Science is not required to be a part of the accountability system under NCLB. We must develop science standards and an assessment aligned with those standards. Districts are reminded to include science as a priority in its curriculum as it may be possible that science will be added to the determination of AYP if legislated in the reauthorization of NCLB in 2007.
- Starting point – DECA will implement the requirements of NCLB for a state accountability system based on assessment scores from spring of 2003. NCLB clearly outlines the mathematical procedure states must use to determine the starting point. Individual schools (about 750) will be rank ordered by the percent of students proficient and advanced. The score for the school that happens to be at the 20th percent of cumulative enrollment will be the starting point for the state goal. Simply stated, a line will be drawn from the starting point to 100% proficiency in the year 2013-2014. That will become the goal that all schools must meet each year.
- Separate starting points for reading and math will be established.
- **Will each school have its own starting point?** No, all schools will be compared to the same state goal.
- **Does each school have to have a 5% yearly increase in the students proficient and advanced?** No. The state goal will continue to increase each year as we aim at 100% proficiency. A school or group must simply be above the state goal for that given year to make AYP.
- **Will it work for districts to “play the game” and have students score low this year as the baseline is being set?** No. This is a fallacy. The starting point will be established as stated above. Schools, districts, or subgroups scoring below the state starting point will not make AYP.
- **AYP will be based on Reading, Math, and Science scores – what role will writing assessment play?** Science is not included in the determination of AYP. NCLB only requires the development of science standards and an aligned assessment. The results of the writing assessment will not be used in the accountability system at this time.
- **Why does the Federal Government use two different grades to compare Stanford scores and determine AYP for different ability levels?** When we compare 4th graders one year to 4th graders the next year, it allows us to look at program growth. Is the school improving instruction in the lower grades to enable students to come into 4th grade with higher skills each year? This is the method used to measure the effectiveness of the overall program within a school.
- **It has been said that you need 30 students in a grade for statistics / reporting. Many districts do not have 30 per grade – could you explain this?** NCLB requires

each state to determine the number that will be used to produce statistically reliable information. The current thinking is that the number may be 30; however, this has not been decided for sure. AYP is determined for each school (grade span), not for each grade. This will help some schools get to the number 30. For example, an elementary school that consists of grades K – 5 would have students tested in grades 3, 4, and 5. If they average 10 or more students per grade, the requirement for 30 students would be met for the school. Any number less than 30 would not be placed in school improvement because the information could not be verified to be statistically significant.

The scores for this school would roll up to the district level however. The district would have to have at least 30 students in grades 3-8 and 11 to be placed into school improvement.

The number for reporting may be determined to be 10. This is to assure that the information revealed is not personally identifiable. This is to prevent anyone from looking at the reported data and being able to make a determination of a particular student's performance.

AYP Status

- The 2002 AYP Status Report was mailed out to each district. Each Title I school that has a final AYP status of No or Alert will carry this status into next year as we transition to the new accountability system.
- NCLB requires that the status of each school prior to the passage of NCLB (Jan. 8, 2002) must remain with the school. However, DECA was given authority to use the results of this past year's assessments to give credit to schools that did make AYP. Therefore, the number of schools carrying an alert status into next year has been reduced.
- **Alert status is not school improvement.** It is the year prior and is just used to signify a red flag of warning.
- Title I schools on alert status this year are the only possible schools that could move into school improvement next year.
- It is difficult to speculate what the starting points will be for this next year but it is probably safe to estimate that they will be below 50% students proficient and advanced,
- If your school score is higher than 50% this year and that performance is at least maintained, it is unlikely that your school will go into school improvement next year, even if you are on alert this year.

Title I School Improvement

- Title I school improvement is governed by section 1116. This section pertains only to those schools and districts that receive Title I Part A funds.
- The first year a school, district, or subgroup does not make AYP, the entity is said to be in Alert Status. This is not school improvement. This is only a red flag to bring attention to the possibility of going into school improvement. It does not take two consecutive years of AYP to get out of alert status. If the entity makes AYP the following year, no negative status is applied to it. The report will simply state that the entity made AYP.
- If the school, district, or subgroup fails to make AYP for two consecutive years, the entity is placed in school improvement.

- There are different sanctions for school level and district level Title I school improvement.
- School level
 - The first year of school improvement (2 consecutive years no AYP for either the school as a whole or for a particular subgroup), is called Level One. A school improvement plan must be developed and parents of all children in that school must be given the choice to transfer to another school in the district that is not in school improvement. The district must pay for the transportation of the student to the school of choice. If there is only one school for that grade span in the district, no choice is available. The school may, but is not required to, offer additional services such as supplemental services in this case.
 - If the school makes AYP the following year, it is allowed to remain at its current level of school improvement. Two consecutive years of AYP allows a school to be removed from school improvement status. A school proceeds to the next level if it does not make AYP.
 - Level 2 of school improvement requires the school to again offer choice and to also offer supplemental services to poverty students. The district pays for these services provided by an approved provider. The state provides a list of approved providers that parents may choose from. The district may, but is not required to, pay for transportation costs of students in relation to supplemental services.
 - Level 3 is the corrective action phase. In addition to the choice and supplemental services as provided at level 2, the district is responsible for imposing at least one sanction from the following options: replace school staff, implement a new curriculum, decrease school management authority, appoint an outside expert as an advisor to the school, extend the school day or year, or restructure the internal organization of the school.
 - Level 4 still continues to require choice and supplemental services. The district will also plan and make arrangements for alternative governance of the school.
 - At level 5, the plans for alternative governance are implemented. Choice and supplemental services are no longer required.
- District level
 - A district is considered to be subject to the sanctions required under section 1116 if any of its schools receive Title I funds.
 - If the district as a whole or one of its subgroups does not make AYP for two consecutive years, the district will go into school improvement.
 - The first year in district improvement, a plan must be developed. Technical assistance is provided by the state to support efforts in plan development and implementation.
 - If the LEA has not made AYP by the end of the second full year after being placed in improvement, the district is placed in corrective action.
 - This requires the state to impose at least one of the following options: reduction of federal funds, instituting and implementing a new curriculum with professional development, provided, replace district personnel, remove some schools from the jurisdiction of the district, appoint a trustee to administer the district in place of the superintendent and school board, or abolish or restructure the district.
 - Again, it takes two consecutive years of making AYP to be removed from district improvement.

- Information about Title I School Improvement will be forthcoming in an NCLB newsletter.

Special Education

- There seems to be confusion about the draft regulations that mentions a cap of 0.5% in relation to the alternate assessment. This is not a cap in the number of students who can participate in the alternate assessment. Participation is determined for students in the functional curriculum through the IEP team. This is generally a very small number of students in each district, usually no more than 1 to 2 %.

The cap is on the percentage of students that can be counted as proficient in the accountability system. Only 0.5% of the total tested population (this includes all students in the school, with and without disabilities) can be counted as proficient. If the state had performance levels set on the STAARS test, only a portion of those students who actually attained a proficient level of performance could be counted as such in the accountability system.

Example: If there were 800 students in a district in the grades tested (grades 3-8 and 11), only 4 students who took the STAARS in the district could be counted as proficient for accountability purposes. Calculation: $800 \times 0.5\% = 4$.

Let's say there were 9 students in the district who took the STAARS test. 7 of those students scored proficient on the test. They could be granted this designation for assessment purposes but not for accountability. In determining the district's AYP status, only 4 of those 7 students could be counted as proficient. The remaining 3 students would be counted as less than proficient (basic or below basic).

Note that at this time, performance levels have not been set on the STAARS alternate assessment. Unless this is determined, all STAARS results would be counted as less than proficient for accountability purposes.

Why was this regulation suggested? It is speculated that there was a concern that the number of students taking the alternate assessment might rise as districts attempt to "play the game" and increase the district's proficient score for AYP purposes. This ruling helps keep the alternate assessment for only those students who are truly eligible for such an assessment – those who do not participate in the general curriculum, but in a functional instructional setting.

- **Where is the language for personal assistant aides for Sp. Ed. Where is this language in the blue book?** Statute: section 1119 (e). Regulations: 200.58 (a)(2)(ii).
- **I'm still not sure how limited I am when a Sped. Ed. student has needs that our Sp. Ed. Program is not meeting. When I enter a classroom and that child needs help, can I sit down with them and help them? Can I take them out for one-on-one? Please clarify this. Doesn't NCLB include them as a separate subgroup for accountability?** A student with disabilities can also get Title I services in the same content area if the child is not already receiving services in more than one setting. We consider three settings for services: the general classroom, Special Education, and Title I. A student may receive services in two of three settings. Any more would be considered excessive.

If a student on an IEP is identified as eligible for Title I services, the student must be on the official roll for Title I services and receive all the benefits due to them and their family. In other words, the services are not random, but planned.

In a schoolwide program, all students are eligible for Title I services and there would be much greater flexibility for serving students with disabilities.

Schoolwide

- Schoolwide programs are not held to a higher standard of accountability than a targeted assistance school. Schoolwide means the school or grade span only, not the entire district.

The only requirement that might keep a school from going schoolwide is that all paraprofessionals in the schoolwide school must meet the educational requirements of section 1119. This includes special education aides.

- **Title I allocations: Should the money be distributed differently for schoolwide than targeted assistance?** No. One example – schoolwide should spend 5% of total allocation for professional development. Are there other stipulations? There is no requirement for schoolwide programs to spend 5% of its allocation for professional development, but the schoolwide plan must address professional development needs. The source of the funding can vary.

The district must set aside 5% of the district allocation for the needs of 1119. All Title I programs are encouraged to spend funds for general professional development as needed by the program. If you have 2 Title I schools in your district, does more money go to the schoolwide school vs. the targeted assisted school? No, the district must allocate the funds to the schools based on the formula. The schoolwide building may receive more funds, but it would be because of the increased number of poverty students.

- **When you said that in a school wide school ALL paraprofessionals must be certified, does that include Sp. Ed. paraprofessionals?** Yes, any para that provides any instructional assistance.
- **Does it matter which person on SST (School Support Team) we contact?** Are they assigned to districts? Yes, assignments are made depending upon geographical location and workload. SST (School Support Team) members generally help both schools in improvement and those planning a schoolwide program. Assignments will be given to schoolwide and school improvement schools once they have been made.
- **It has been suggested that NCLB would encourage schoolwide schools to get out of schoolwide because of all the “regs”. What does this mean?** The only additional regulation pertaining to schoolwide programs that does not exist for targeted assistance schools is the application of the paraprofessional rule. Because all staff in a schoolwide program are considered Title I, the regulations for paraprofessionals applies to all. This is the only regulation that may affect schoolwide programs differently than targeted assistance programs.
- **If a schoolwide school is placed in school improvement, are ALL schools within a district placed on school improvement even if ALL schools don’t provide Title services?** No. A schoolwide program is for an individual school only. Schoolwide does not mean district-wide. So a school being placed in school improvement will affect that school (grade span) only.
- **If one site goes into school improvement for math/reading, are all sites in school improvement?** Our sites are under one roof and only (P-6) is in school wide. A school is defined by the instructional mode rather than the placement in a physical building. The designation of your school as an elementary including P-6 or K-5 depends upon who the

school is accredited by DECA. All districts have at least two schools: K-8 and HS, but most have at least three levels: elementary, middle school, and high school.

When looking at school-level school improvement, the designation affects only that particular school (grade span). District-level improvement does affect the entire district, including all of its schools.

- **Have any schools in the state gone from Schoolwide back to Targeted Assistance?** No. Schools must inform DECA if this is their decision, but none have done so thus far. Some schools have dropped Title I services in a particular building because of insufficient funds to cover all the levels desired.
- **Can schools get a copy of the checklist we are evaluated on for the school improvement / schoolwide plan?** Yes. Schools were provided with the components that must be present in the plan with general information about each component. A more specific checklist is in development and will be disseminated to all schoolwide and school improvement schools when completed.
- **Is it more beneficial to move the entire class to the Title I room and work on reinforcing classroom skills or is it more beneficial for the Title I teacher to go into the classroom and provide support during class time?** If this is a schoolwide program, the flexibility is provided to allow services in the classroom. Generally, services in a schoolwide program are provided in the classroom or through an extended day program such as after or before school. As schoolwide plans are revised this year, schools are encouraged to consider alternative methods of providing services to students.
- **If this school year's plan is completed, do we need to rewrite the schoolwide plan for this school year?** No. Each existing schoolwide program will operate under its current plan through the 2002-2003 school year. Revised plans are due to the Title I office in April and will become effective for the 2003-2004 school year once it has been approved.
- **What if the parents of the preschool age children at the schoolwide facility choose not to send them to preschool?** Neither preschool or kindergarten attendance is required in this state. **Transition?** Transition services must be offered to all district four-year olds and their parents. If the child does not attend the district's preschool or if the district does not have a preschool, the district must consider other ways of communicating with these parents and providing services for them. Training will be provided to help with this area.
- **If a school goes school wide in Jr. High, do paras in elementary need to be certified?** No, if the elementary is a targeted assistance program, only those paras paid by Title I would have to meet the requirements. The schoolwide program is implemented by school, not the entire district. Only those schools that are actually implementing the schoolwide program must assure that all paraprofessionals meet the new requirements.
- **Does the Title program still have pullouts if you go schoolwide?** You may if you wish. There are times and certain students where the quiet atmosphere of a separate room is beneficial. Generally however, pullout programs are greatly reduced in schoolwide programs as all students are considered eligible for Title I services and teachers are not restricted as to which students to work with. They have the freedom to work in the classroom, co-teach with the classroom teacher, work with small groups of students, or work with individual students.

- **We have Sp. Ed. aides that come to one schoolwide site for about one (1) hour per day. Are they required to become paraprofessionals with the 64 hours?** The minimum number of credits has now been determined to be 48. Yes, any aide providing instructional services in a schoolwide program must meet the requirements. It may be necessary to look at scheduling practices to work through this situation.

Data Retreats

- Data retreats have been scheduled for December and February. Please refer to the website for more information. <http://www.state.sd.us/deca/TA/news/otameetings.htm>
- **Do we bring our data to the retreat?** Yes. We provide some information but the bulk of it must come from the school itself. Do we use state data? Yes, SAT9 data is used to teach the process of data analysis, as it is data that all districts have. You may bring other data with you to analyze as well. Do we combine data? The analyses of the various data sources are compared to give a broader perspective of the strengths and needs of the school or district.

Teacher and Paraprofessionals

- An email explaining the requirements for the 1119 compliance assurance was sent out recently. This information is also on the Title I Part A web page.
- The signed assurance must be maintained at the school office and at the main district office. It does not need to be sent to DECA at this time.
- **What costs can be charged to Title I for paraprofessionals to become highly qualified? On-line tests?** Tuition and fees? All of the mentioned are appropriate costs that can be reimbursed. In addition, training prior to taking the test and materials related to training or classes could be included. **How many credit hours can be reimbursed – 48?** Yes, 48 credits could be paid for if a person was going to accumulate credits rather than obtaining an associate degree. However, if a paraprofessional has committed to getting an associate degree, credits beyond the 48 hours could be funded with Title I funds.
- **Since Special Educ. pre-schoolers need a transition plan (1114 (b)-(f)), do pre-school paras at a school wide school need to be “highly qualified” or just paras in K-5?** The law is ambiguous in regards to this question, but it seems to address K-12 only. USDOE has been asked for clarification. DECA will consider only K-12 as needing to meet the requirements until or unless we hear differently from the federal office.
- **Are paraprofessionals that are in special education included in the new regulations?** Yes, but only in a schoolwide program
- **Can we use Title II funds first for professional development, then Title I?** No. Section 1119 clearly states that each district must set aside 5% of its Title I allocation to help staff meet the requirements of that section. Title II funds may be used in addition if needed
- **Is there a list of courses that will be required of the paraprofessionals?** There is no list. If the para is accumulating credits to reach the 48 required, they may take any college credit, as long as the credit comes from an accredited college or university. If the para is working towards an associate degree, specific courses required by that institution

would have to be taken. Where do they begin? Each paraprofessional must assess their own needs and goals for continuing credit. Some may prefer to take the college courses that would enable them to put them to use if a degree of some kind might be a long-range goal. Others may want to pursue one of the associate degrees now offered in the state or a full four-year degree. If the para prefers to take the test, training to prepare for that test would be appropriate. Dialog between the paraprofessional and the building administrator should take place in order to develop a plan of action that will satisfy the needs of both the individual and the school.

- **Do paraprofessionals need some type of certificate or just 2 years of higher learning?** No certificate is required. Documentation of the college credits earned (minimum of 48 credits) must be provided to the school and on file.
- **Can paraprofessional credits be renewal credits?** No. Credits must come from an accredited institution; renewal credits are offered by DECA, not an institution of higher learning
- **Does the state have an assessment yet to give to paraprofessionals?** It is anticipated that the test will become available later this fall. Districts will be notified as soon as it is ready for use.
- **Can schools hire under “authority to act” if no other options are available?** Teachers – yes. Up until 2005-06, schools will still be able to hire under the “a4th6r5ty t6 act”. Paraprofessionals -- No. There are no options to do anything but full compliance with the law as it is stated. If all applicants for the position do not have the necessary qualifications, the position cannot be filled. Districts will be challenged to explore other ways of serving the needs of students.
- **Why do paraprofessionals have to be certified for a school wide program and not a targeted assistance program?** Title I only has jurisdiction over programs funded under that program. In a targeted assistance school, Title I can only mandate the requirements for staff paid directly with these federal funds. In a schoolwide program, the entire school is considered to be supported by Title I as great flexibility is provided to the school through this program. Therefore, all staff are considered Title I staff and all must comply with the Title I regulations.
- **Paraprofessionals – The law designates a 2-yr. degree. Why doesn’t it specify what this degree is in?** The first two years of any four-year degree are usually spent taking general courses required of the university. If a person started college and accrued credits, it is likely that those credits would cover a variety of courses. The law is not requiring any more of the paraprofessionals than would be expected for anyone during their first two years of college.
- **Where are we in regards to tests for paraprofessionals and/or academic program requirements?** The state test is expected to be available yet this fall or early winter. Several programs have been developed to provide an opportunity for paras to get an associate degree. Refer to the first NCLB newsletter regarding teacher and paraprofessional quality for more details. Credits required? A minimum of 48 college credits is required.
- **If a newly hired paraprofessional does not have 48 semester hours but has a Paraprofessional Teacher Aid Certificate for the state of New York, does this meet the law? Is there state-to-state reciprocity?** Districts can accept college credit or an associate degree from other states as long as the institution granting the credits or degree is accredited. No other certificates will meet the requirements of NCLB.

- **Can subs be hired with professional development Title I money?** No, but Title II funds can be used to pay for substitutes if teachers need to be away from the classroom for professional development.
- **If paraprofessionals pass the rigorous State exam – do they still need 2-year study?** No. Either one will suffice.
- **Do Title I teachers in a K-6 building have to have a middle school endorsement to teach reading-math?** No, an elementary degree is required.
- **Could DECA and/or Title I provide DDN series of sessions for teachers and paraprofessionals (provided by “Master” teachers) with reading and math skills and instructional strategies? Free to schools?** This suggestion will be taken into consideration as further technical assistance for schools is developed.
- **What about training of substitutes vs. paraprofessionals?** Neither Title I nor Title II mentions substitutes. These funds may not be used to train substitutes.
- **Does a kindergarten teacher need an early childhood endorsement?** No, only an elementary degree is required. However, a kindergarten or early childhood endorsement would be beneficial.
- **Preschool Paraprofessional – We have a preschool teacher’s aide that assists our certified preschool teacher. Many of her job duties/tasks involve with just supplying another pair of hands. Would this preschool aide be exempt from the highly qualified requirements much like the Sp. Ed. Aide who is not providing direct instruction, but is more auxiliary tasks like cleaning up finger painting messes or supervising recess and break times?** If the aide never helps children, the aide would be exempt. But preschool aides generally do assist children with a variety of tasks and would need to meet requirements.
How the requirements for teachers and paraprofessionals affect Title I preschools is unclear. USDOE has been asked to clarify this.
- **Prior learning credits** – most SD colleges aren’t willing to use this as a way of helping aides become certified. Some colleges accept training hours for transfer as credits into one of their programs. It is up to the individual to work with a college to accomplish this. **How is the state going to help out?** DECA has corresponded with state institutions of higher education to make them aware of the new requirements. A state test is also being developed.
- **How will aides be paid - according as they receive degrees?** This is a local decision.
- **If our principal is not fully certified -- can our school district use Title I monies to pay for college training?** No. Title I funds can only be used for the purposes of section 1119 which pertains to Title I paraprofessionals and teachers and to core subject area teachers in a Title I school only. Title II funds may be used for the purposed described in this question.